

SMILE AND SING



By
Ralph Marlow Bliss

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1905



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Book 1

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Smile and Sing

✥ ✥ and other verses ✥ ✥

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✥ ANNIE MARIE BLISS ✥



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Smile and Sing



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Offered in loving gratitude
To A. A. H.
To whom the lines
“Smile and Sing”
and
“In Quietness and Confidence”
were originally written in 1900.

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Smile and Sing.

Smile, little sister, when all seems wrong,
Shorten the long day with a song.

Show your light in the darkened place,
And see it reflect in another's face.

It's as easy to sing as it is to fret,
Think happy thoughts and the gloom forget.

Hundreds are walking the self-same road,
Lose your own, easing another's load.

Stretch out a hand to those at your side,
Lead them to Heaven's door open wide.

A smile is the hinge on which it swings,
And God's own messenger, a heart that sings.

“In Quietness and Confidence.”

My heart was heavy with thoughts of self,
Tossed hither and yon with doubt and fear ;
And I longed for the rest that was promised “there”
To recompense me for the burden “here.”

I fought with discouragement weak with the strife,
And hoped with a courage born of despair,
That sometime and somewhere the Father would hear
My cry in the dark, and answer my prayer.

But my eyes were closed and I could not see
The floods of light that enveloped me ;
And the shadow and chill of perpetual night
Seemed taking the place of the warmth and the light.

And the ears so deaf from the jar and roar
Of earth’s machinery, heard no more
The heavenly music, sweet and strong,
Of the ringing chorus of infinite song.

Till a messenger fleet from the shores of peace
From my dream of sense roused me at length,
And I heard a voice, small, still, and sweet :
“In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

Then I knew that the sun was shining still,
The joy-bells rang for me their chime ;
I had proved that the promise of God was sure,
My prayer was answered and peace was mine.



Consider the Roses.

Open your heart, little sister,
To the sunshine and the dew ;
Live the life of a rose, dear,
And Life's roses will bloom for you.

Bloom, little sister, and sweeten
The air so heavy with sin ;
Let your sunny face brighten
Dark chambers of thought within.

Tell it not in words, dear,
The roses do not preach ;
The perfume tells the story,
Our deeds the lessons teach.

Don't fret at your narrow quarters,
And long for another place ;
'Tis the blighting frost of discontent
That kills the smile in your face.

Be patient and brave if the tempest
Seems to bring you pain ;
For hearts are cleansed of earth-dust
As roses are washed in rain.

The Song of Bethlehem.

Arranged for Music:—"One Sweetly Solemn Thought" by R. S. Ambrose.

Angels of Bethlehem,
Heralds of heavenly light,
Sang a song of tidings glad
To the toilers in the night.

And o'er a sleeping world,
Shone the star of Hope to men,
Lighting the purple darkness,
Sweet star of Bethlehem.

E'en now it lights the path
Where we often walk alone,
Hope shines on our darkness,
Guiding the feet that roam.

Still are the angels singing,
Soothing the heart aches of men ;
Cheering those who work and pray,
Sweet songs of Bethlehem.

Father, Oh lead thy children
O'er hills and valleys low,
To the humble place of cradled Love
God is here, we know.

Shadows.

In my path a shadow lay,
 Stretched before me long and dark ;
And I feared the next step onward,
 With a heaviness of heart.

And I tripped and stumbled blindly
 Over stones I could not see ;
When a voice of silver sweetness
 Called from overhead to me :—

“Turn about, O weary traveler,
 Face the sunlight of God’s day ;
’Tis yourself that casts the shadow
 That is darkening your way.”

“Face the light, so shall the shadow
 Lay behind thee,—seen no more ;
And the stones o’er which you stumbled
 Shall lead up to Heaven’s door.”

As I turned to hear the message,
 Slowly moved the shadow, too.
“Could it be,” I thought in wonder,
 “That the angel voice spake true?”

Yes, ’twas self that cast the shadow,
 I have proved it many a time ;
For I’m facing God’s bright sunlight,
 And the shadows lay behind.

The Angel of Peace.

Gently as the snowflakes falling
From a dark and cloudy sky,
Sweetly as showers of cherry blooms
From grey branches bare and dry,
Comes the Angel of His Presence
Out of clouds that dim the sight,
Bringing peace like breath of perfume,
Clothing earth in robes of white.

'Tis the same sweet voice of "Peace"
That the faithful shepherds heard ;
And the storm-tossed, frightened sailors
Saw the waves obey the word
That we hear while we are working,
Ofttimes in a starry night ;
Sore afraid we call the Master,
And His "Peace" puts fear to flight.

Oft while climbing rugged hillsides,
Footsore, weary, and alone,—
Arms invisible, everlasting,
Round us lovingly are thrown.
And the crooked paths are straightened,
Stones and briars are brushed aside
By that Presence, "Prince of Peace,"
Counsellor, companion, guide.

So like showers of cherry blooms,
Fragrant let our deeds of love
Sweeten barren lives around us
With pure thoughts born from above.
And when storms and tempests gather,
And the darkening clouds drop rain,
O'er the waves walks Love victorious,—
With His "Peace," Christ comes again.



Trifles.

It was only a cheery "Good morning,"
That she said as I started away ;
But it echoed and rang in my busy thought
As I worked through a long, long day.

It was only a smile that she gave me,
But the smile was so sweet and true
That it gilded the edge of my cloudy thought
'Till it melted the cloud in blue.

It was only a rose with a message,
And "I love you," was all that it said ;
But it lifted a doubt which had seemed to be,
Leaving sweet peace instead.

T'was only a short verse of comfort
That she culled from the storehouse of Love ;
But the truth was the balm for a sense of hurt,
And it lifted my thought above.

It is often the things we call "Trifles,"
(If a smile or a flower may be such),
That are sure to help others and make us grow,
For he gaineth, who giveth much.

And the sweetness from loving and doing
When the heart from all self is freed,
Is for you, and for me, and for every one,
Who is filling a brother's need.

Love's Work.

Ours the sowing and the weeding
And the reaping to be done ;
God's to send His showers of blessing
And His warming sun.

Ours to labor in the field
From dawn till set of sun ;
God's to cheer the laborers
With His sweet "Well done."

Be our words the flowers,
And our deeds the golden wheat,
To feed the hearts so hungry
With the bread of life so sweet.

The Heart's Holidays.

Every day is a New Years Day
As the heart outgrows the old ;
Every morn of an untried day
Has a wealth of joy untold.
Yesterday with its burden and care
With the night has slipped away,
And the smiling face of an infant morn
Cheers the heart and gilds the day.

Every day is an Easter Day
To the crucified heart of earth ;
Self is the stone that has sealed the place
Of the resurrection birth.
Love is the hand that has brought release
And it leads to life and light ;
Into gardens of loveliness
Where we walk 'mid lilies white.

Every day is a Thanksgiving Day
If we count our blessings o'er ;
Every day is a harvest gleaned
Where another sowed before.
Every day has its joyful feast,
And the meal by Love prepared,
Feeds the hungry and cheers the heart
As the bread and wine are shared.

Every day is a Christmas Day
To the heart that seeks the Child ;
Bright the star that leads the way
O'er the plains and hills so wild.
We, who now with the wise men seek
And our gold and treasures bring,
Find him close to the mother heart
And we kneel to the infant king.



The Garden of the World.

I stood outside a garden fair
Murmuring at my loneliness ;
And watched the toilers working there
Amid the perfumed loveliness.

I thought "If I could linger here,
I know that work must pleasure be ;
No heart can ache, no life be drear,
When only roses one can see."

The gardener hearkened to my plea,
The latch was raised and welcome said ;
The workers came, and, greeting me,
A rose crown placed upon my head.

I smiled and sang a song of praise,
And thought the angels close at hand ;
The sun shone warm in perfumed rays,
Was this not Heaven's border-land ?

Full soon a task was given to me,—
To cultivate and tend each day
My piece of land, to prune each tree,
To keep the garden foes away.

Neath burning sun, in days of rain,
With bending form the ground I tilled ;
The cruel thorns left tracks of pain,
And eyes with scalding tears were filled.

The crown that once was blushing red,
The heat had withered, the tempest torn ;
The roses and the leaves were dead,
Each rose left its companion thorn.

Then, weary of all the pain, I sought
The Master's side, imploring him
To free me from my irksome lot,
For heart was sad and eyes were dim.

"My child, you know not what you ask,
The freedom that is yours to know
Is strength that's equal to the task,
And not to flee, but face the foe."

"Fear not, though hard the lesson be,
And often learned through bitter pain ;
The tasks that self has set for thee
Are holding o'er thee cruel reign."

"For weary grows ambition's way
When lashed by selfish greed of fame ;
And pleasure's flowers droop and fade,
While gold is winged with selfish gain."

“The cruel thorns that bruise and sting
Sink deeper with each selfish thought ;
And only unselfed love can bring
Release from bondage self has wrought.”

“A love that sees thy brother’s needs,
Gives tenderness instead of blame ;
Forgives the hasty word, nor heeds
The whispering of suspicion’s name.”

And then I saw the Master’s hand
Point where my pathway lay ;
It was the self-same garden land
Where I had thought I could not stay.

Again the gate swung open wide,
And Love went in this time with me ;
While self, thorn-crowned was crucified
Outside the gate, and I was free.

Yes, free ! And work is now a song,
Since Love has set my heart in tune ;
Love’s “everlasting arms” are strong,
And Heaven’s smile is perfect boon.

Hymn.

Our Fathers' God.

Arranged for music:—"To the Angels" by Napoleon Zardo,
published by G. Ricordi & Co., London.

God of our Fathers !
Mighty One of glory !
Love breathes thy story
Soft as summer air.
Come with thy blessing,
Earth's weary resting,
And whisper peace to hearts that mourn.
God's will is done,
And angels come
To set the earth-bound free.

Hushed the sound of weeping ;
Ceased the cry of pain.
Night's veil is lifted,
Dark clouds are rifted. See !
The sunrise lights the earth,
God's children rise and sing
To greet the day.

Oh Love Divine !
Our lives are thine !
Sweet voices cheer us
And make us strong.
When foes appear
Be thou more near!
Encamp around us,
Our safe-guard be,
And lead us on!



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